

FAQs: Ph.D. in Family Science

What is the focus of the Ph.D. program?

The program focuses on family theory, family policy, ethnic families, at-risk families, research methodology, and development of culturally sensitive prevention and intervention programs.

Why would you choose a Ph.D. in family studies over a program in a more traditional discipline?

Family Science professionals focus on the strengths and challenges of the family unit, examining a diverse range of family issues and seeking solutions to family problems. The applied, multidisciplinary focus of the discipline makes Ph.D. graduates very attractive to employers in higher education, government, and the nonprofit and private sectors.

What are the primary areas of faculty research?

Our outstanding faculty work on a diverse range of projects including: aging; children; communities; couples; family finance and resource management; family policy; international issues; mental health, addiction, and family therapy; military families; parenting; poverty; rural families; violence; and work and family. *How does the location of your program influence student's experiences and opportunities?*

The Department of Family Science at the University of Maryland has an unparalleled location only 9 miles from the heart of Washington, DC, and a short drive to Baltimore and the state's capitol in Annapolis. What professional experiences are offered at UMCP that make the Ph.D. program stand out from other schools?

The Department is committed to preparing students for their desired careers as educators, researchers, policy analysts, and professionals in other settings. The Department sponsors the [Preparing Future Faculty and Family Professionals \(PFFFP\) program](#), an initiative modeled after the national Preparing Future Faculty Program of the Council of Graduate Schools and the American Association of Colleges and Universities. This program provides doctoral students with teaching and research mentors, seminars and workshops, site visits to different types of academic institutions, information about nonacademic careers, career mapping, and preparation for the job search.

The Family Science Department also offers challenging internships at [national institutes](#) and advocacy organizations, exciting [research](#) opportunities with department faculty, and funded student travel to professional conferences (e.g., National Council on Family Relations, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy).

What careers do Family Science Ph.D. graduates pursue? What are some typical jobs that graduates obtain?

Family Science graduates hold faculty positions in colleges/universities and research institutions; post-doctoral fellowships; and high level research and administrative positions involving family policy analysis, delivery of human services, and program evaluation.

What are the minimum requirements for entry to the program?

Applicants to the doctoral program in Family Science must have a bachelor's or master's degree in family studies or a related discipline, an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0, and a graduate GPA of at least 3.3. Ph.D. students are required to have a GRE (Graduate Record Examination) scores of at least 1000 on the quantitative and verbal sections combined.

Are there any print or online resources that can help me in writing my dissertation?

Yes. The Graduate School has compiled an extensive list of print resources, online resources, and PowerPoint presentations designed specifically to assist you in completing your dissertation in a timely manner.

Can I enter the program without a Master's?

Yes. If you enter without a master's degree, you will do your master's coursework en route to the Ph.D. and complete a Master's thesis. You can choose between obtaining a master's degree in Family Science, or a master's degree in Couple and Family Therapy (CFT). If you wish to do the CFT master's program, you will need to complete the CFT application in addition to the regular application, and will need to be accepted into both the CFT program and the Ph.D. program.

How long does it take to complete the program?

The program requires 51 graduate credit hours beyond the master's degree. The typical full-time doctoral student, who enters the program with a master's degree, completes the Ph.D. degree in 3-4 years (2 years of coursework and 1-2 years of dissertation work). A full-time doctoral student, who enters the program without a master's degree, typically completes the Ph.D. degree in 5 years; the student obtains a master's degree en route to the Ph.D.

Can I do the program part-time?

The vast majority of students admitted to the program are full-time.

Can students hold outside jobs while attending the Ph.D. program?

The Department provides a fellowship or assistantship to almost every Ph.D. student. Students who receive University fellowships can work a maximum of 10 hours per week. Students with Graduate Assistantships can work up to 20 hours per week. It is recommended that full-time Ph.D. students work no more than 20 hours per week (on campus or outside employment).

How do I apply for funding?

When you complete the Graduate School application, check the box indicating that you wish to be considered for a Graduate Assistantship. There is no additional form to complete; all students accepted into the program are considered for Graduate Fellowship and/or Assistantship support.

What financial aid is available?

A limited amount of financial aid is available in the form of fellowships, graduate assistantships, and loans from federal, state, and private sources. Details regarding loan eligibility can be obtained from the [Student Financial Aid Office](#).

How many students are enrolled in the program?

There are currently about 25 students enrolled in the Ph.D. program, and approximately 6 students are admitted each year. There are about 50 total students enrolled in the Family Science M.S. and Ph.D. programs.

Is the University of Maryland a good place for ethnic minority students?

The Department is proud of the rich ethnic and gender diversity of its students, faculty, and staff. Over 40% of

our graduate students and 36% of our faculty are members of ethnic minority groups. In 2004, Family Science was named the “Outstanding Academic Unit Award” by the University of Maryland President’s Commission on Ethnic Minority Issues. The Department continues to provide a welcoming environment for students from all backgrounds, promoting learning, collaboration, and high student morale.

When is the application deadline?

All Department and graduate school application materials for the Ph.D. program are due December 15th. This includes GRE scores, which must be received by that date.

Do you accept students for the spring semester?

No, the Family Science doctoral program accepts students for fall admission only.

Do I have to take the GRE’s?

Yes. The GRE General Test is required for all applicants... no exceptions. If you need information on taking the exam, please visit the [GRE's website](#). This link will provide information on test registration, preparation, and score reporting.